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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7102  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 5195  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3762  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0979  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 3834  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 1093  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2913  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 7688  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5369  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 0215  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2052  
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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS  
MCC FOR S GROFF, D TETER, D NASSIRY AND E BURKE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/18/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [KVPR](#) [CE](#)  
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: ATTEMPTS AT TMVP RECONCILIATION FAIL

REF: COLOMBO 709

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr., for reasons 1.4(b,d).

11. (S) SUMMARY: On May 18, PolOff met Kanagasabai "Mahesh" Prabhakaran, the Head of the Peace Secretariat of the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP or "Karuna group") and "Pathmini" Devananda, also known as Sivageetha Prabhakaran, the TMVP Political Secretary. The two described the cause of the current split in the TMVP between its leader Karuna Amman and his former military commander Pillayan. They detailed an unsuccessful effort to reunite the party, and the personal threat they feel from being caught in the middle between the warring factions. Mahesh and Pathmini may flee to Chennai to seek asylum in the U.S. or UK (reftel) because of phone threats from Pillayan to join him or face the consequences.  
END SUMMARY.

#### ORIGINS OF THE SPLIT

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12. (S) Pathmini stated that the split began approximately a month ago, when Karuna played favorites among the TMVP faithful by rewarding the most loyal cadres with comfortable positions within the organization. In particular, Karuna promoted a TMVP doctor to a senior position, displacing one of Pillayan's close associates. According to Pathmini, Pillayan had the doctor assassinated, although Pillayan denies any involvement in the killing. After the doctor's death, Karuna and Pillayan battled for control of the TMVP over a wide range of issues, including use of the group's limited financial resources. This eventually resulted in Pillayan leaving with 40-50 battle-hardened soldiers. Pathmini said that newspaper reports indicating that 150 to 300 cadres joined Pillayan are greatly exaggerated.

#### FAILED ATTEMPT AT RECONCILIATION

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13. (S) Although Karuna has many more cadres than Pillayan, Karuna apparently feels threatened by Pillayan's forces and has sought reconciliation. On May 16, Mahesh and Pathmini attended a meeting "in the East" with Karuna, Pillayan and other top TMVP leaders. After the meeting was over, Mahesh and Pathmini believed that the group's differences had been mended. However, while she was returning to Colombo, Pillayan called Pathmini and again threatened to have her killed if she and Mahesh did not join him. Pathmini reported that Pillayan characterized the meeting as a sham. According to her, Pillayan said the TMVP's internal problems, the result of Karuna wielding too much personal power, remained unresolved.

"NOWHERE TO TURN"

14. (S) Pathmini and Mahesh claimed they cannot stay with Karuna because Pillayan will kill them; they cannot join Pillayan because Karuna will kill them; and they cannot go back to "normal life" because both Karuna and Pillayan will try to kill them. They also continue to fear retribution from the LTTE for leaving with Karuna in 2004. Pathmini told us the LTTE assassinated her father in 2005. Both Pathmini and Mahesh believe that the LTTE still intend to kill them, along with Mahesh's two brothers and his mother, all of whom work in the TMVP headquarters in Colombo. As a result, Pathmini confided that the family intends to flee to Chennai and file for refugee status. They hoped that UNHCR will assist them in their efforts to resettle in a western country, such as the U.S. or UK.

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15. (C) Post has met at the second secretary level with TMVP representatives on two previous occasions in the last year in order to gain insight into the increasingly powerful group's operations and plans. Although Mahesh and Pathmini originally sought help in obtaining asylum in the U.S., Poloff explained that the U.S. cannot offer asylum to applicants who are in their home country. He encouraged them to seek help from responsible UN agencies in Sri Lanka and India.

BIO NOTE

16. (C) Mahesh and Pathmini said they have been married for six years. Pathmini was formerly Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) leader Douglas Devananda's mistress and had two children with him, who do not live with her. She also reportedly had an affair with Karuna. Although their last name is Prabhakaran, neither is related to LTTE supreme commander Velupillai Prabhakaran.

17. (C) COMMENT: According to this report, Pillayan's band of battle-hardened 14 to 25 year-old young men with machine guns does not intend to link up with the LTTE, but will try to settle in as a rogue element in the East's already splintered paramilitary landscape. Pillayan has been quoted in numerous newspapers stating he intends to fight both the LTTE and Karuna, if necessary, and is attempting to re-brand himself as a champion for the Tamil people against LTTE terrorism and Karuna extortion. Although Pillayan presently has only a small group of cadres, Karuna sees the split as a threat, if for no other reason than that there is now another former ally, in addition to the LTTE, interested in seeing him dead. For the East's already brutalized Tamil citizens, the emergence of a new group to compete with Karuna's well-organized criminal enterprise is a fearsome prospect.

BLAKE